Chips

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Chips

by lauriemich

Summary

For some reason the idea of telling Tommy about Steve's first real kiss feels... off for some reason. It makes his stomach feel weird. Tommy finds out three weeks after it happens because Jeff from baseball mentions it in front of Tommy. Tommy isn't sure why he feels so weird when he finds out, why he has the urge to yell at Steve for it even though Steve's just being a normal guy. Maybe it's because Steve didn't tell Tommy when it happened. That if it were up to him, maybe Tommy never would've known. Tommy and Steve make eye contact across the locker room when Jeff blurts it out, and they both have an apology in their eyes. Matching stomach swooping mild nausea and. awkward guilt clinging to their skin.

Tommy and Steve grow up together, but they're not like their other friends. Talking about girls always feels different between them.

Notes

This is basically snippets of Tommy and Steve's high school experiences and them being really gay about it. Specifically they talk about girls and sexual experiences, but it always feels different between the two of them.

This fic includes their first kisses, talking about girls, losing virginities, and then a time they actually kiss. Tommy and Steve don't actually do a whole lot of physical stuff but I think it's still a good read. Just read it and I think you'll understand it!

See the end of the work for more notes

Steve and Tommy meet in sixth grade on the third day of school. Steve sees Tommy sitting at a table with some other boys in the cafeteria, and just walks right over and sits down next to him. They start talking and by the end of lunch Steve is pretty confident he's made himself a new friend. A week later they're sharing their mandarin orange cups and riding their bikes together after school. Steve and Tommy don't know then that they'll be friends through all the big moments of growing up, but they do know they'll be friends at school the next day. They do math homework on the curb of Tommy's house and swim in Steve's pool together the first time Steve's parents leave him home alone without a babysitter.

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In seventh grade, Tommy and Steve meet Carol Perkins. She slots herself in pretty well, but Steve doesn't like her as much as Tommy does.
"I think you two butt heads because you're just so similar", Tommy says one day, and he watches with delight when both Carol and Steve scrunch their faces up in disgust. "We are not!" They say at the same time, turning to each other and looking even more annoyed.
Tommy likes that Carol and Steve are similar. It makes things easier for him in some way he can't exactly understand, but being around Carol is genuinely enjoyable in a way that being around other girls isn't. Carol doesn't hit on Tommy the way other girls do, she just rolls her eyes at him and kicks him under the table. Tells him that she likes him when they're alone before Steve sits down at lunch. Tommy's still trying to process what Carol said when Steve sits down next to her and smirks at Tommy, "what's got you all pink, Hagan?" Carol makes the same sly face at Tommy, and he just stares at both of them.

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In eighth grade, Tommy gets his first kiss. It's actually not with Carol, it's with her friend Tiffany. They're all sitting in the middle of Steve's carpeted basement playing spin the bottle with a warm beer bottle. It's just Tiffany, Carol, Samantha, Rebecca, Steve, Tommy, Jeff, and Greg in the basement. Not a full on party, just some people from homeroom that Steve invited over since his parents aren't home. They're not even tipsy really, the eight of them only shared three cheap beers from a four pack Carol smuggled over from her older brother.

When Tommy twists the bottle on the floor it spins and spins and lands on Steve. Steve laughs, "do you wanna lay one on me?", while

Tommy rolls his eyes and twists the bottle again. Two boys can't kiss, even if it's just in Steve's basement with six other kids. Steve's so obviously kidding, but Tommy still feels some warmth start buzzing around in the pit of his stomach. He's still buzzing when the bottle lands on Tiffany the second time around. Tiffany is blonde and soft and pretty, but she's not Tommy's type at all. Carol rolls her eyes when she sees Tiffany lean subtly forward. Tommy looks at Steve and he's smiling encouragingly. Tommy looks from Steve back to Carol before leaning in and kissing Tiffany.

It's just a peck, but Tommy gets to taste her lipgloss for a second. It's sickly sweet, like the way Carol's new perfume smells. It doesn't feel magical the way he's heard first kisses do, but maybe everyone was just exaggerating. When Tommy pulls back, Tiffany is smiling and everyone around them is softly cheering. Carol looks annoyed still, but she's cheering with Steve's encouragement.

Carol doesn't kiss anyone in the game because her bottle lands on Rebecca twice and then Samantha and everyone gives up on Carol's spins. Greg kisses Rebecca, Samantha kisses Jeff. Steve gets his first kiss minutes after Tommy when his bottle lands on Tiffany too. Steve winks at Tommy when it lands, "I guess I'm stealing her" and Tiffany just giggles all shy. Tommy is suddenly hyperaware of the fact that he's watching Steve and Tiffany kiss. Everyone is watching everyone kiss, that's the whole thing. It shouldn't feel weird all of a sudden. Tommy hasn't felt weird about anyone else kissing, but suddenly he feels like he's about to vibrate out of his skin and he feels sort of sick with anticipation.

When Steve leans in to kiss Tiffany, Tommy feels his breath catch and hopes that Carol and Jeff sitting beside him don't notice. Steve puts his hand on the back of Tiffany's head, pulls her in a little bit and then presses his lips to hers all softly. It looks nice the way Steve does it, nicer than any of the other boys, Tommy thinks. It's a closed mouth kiss like all the other kisses have been, but Tommy feels like it lasts forever. His face is on fire for whatever reason and he's trying hard to school it. Carol seems to notice, nudging his knee with her knee and scrunching up her nose a tiny bit when he looks at her.

After that, Rebecca declares that she has to ride her bike home, and Greg offers to ride with her. Everyone starts leaving after that, and eventually it's just Tommy, Steve and Carol left. They've been down here a couple times before when Steve's parents are gone. Carol waits a couple minutes and then she asks, "you guys wanna see something?". "Sure" Tommy says, hefting himself off of the floor and

sitting down on Steve's couch. Steve follows Tommy's lead, getting up and sitting next to him on the couch. Carol skitters upstairs, throwing a "be right back" over her shoulder halfway up the steps.

The air between Steve and Tommy seems heavier now without Carol, and Tommy's wondering if those six sips of beer really are doing something to him and that's why he's feeling so weird. Steve is wondering if his first kiss has left him off kilter, wondering if his parents will be able to see it on him when they come home. "Did you like kissing Tiffany?" Steve whispers, scooting closer to Tommy, his face closer than it has to be. "Uh- I mean, yeah. Did you?" Tommy asks, voice weirdly breathy. Steve nods, "she tasted all sweet. Do you think we'd taste sweet now?" Steve asks, breath hot against Tommy's face.

Steve hasn't ever really been properly drunk, but he thinks this is what it would feel like. The way he feels foggy, like the windows of his dad's car when it's cold out but he has the heat on. He feels kind of soft too, warm in a weird way. He's not sure what's crossing the wires, but he kind of wants to kiss Tommy. Maybe your first kiss makes you want to kiss everyone, the beer and Tiffany leaving but Tommy staying just crossing his wires.

Tommy doesn't get to answer because Carol is stomping down the stairs and Steve leans his face away, still thigh to thigh with Tommy. Carol sits down on the floor in front of Tommy and Steve, holding the little pink purse her mom got her this Christmas. Carol opens her purse and pulls out a pack of cigarettes and a lighter. "Took this too," she says, pulling a cigarette out of the pack. "No shit, Carol" Steve laughs a little. "How many are in there?" Tommy asks. "Only two. Sorry. Couldn't steal a more full pack" Carol says. Without even thinking, Steve blurts out "Tommy and me can share".

After a beat Steve adds, "you can get a full one because you stole them". Carol seems pleased at this, and smiles wide. Tommy is trying to keep his breathing normal, because for some reason it's starting to get to him that he and Steve seem to be sharing everything tonight. Carol pulls out another cigarette and hands it to Steve, grabbing her own again and then lighting it. She passes the lighter to Steve when she's done. Steve lights his cigarette, and then Carol and Steve take their first drags at the same time.

Tommy watches them, wondering how they wordlessly and perfectly timed their drags. He's also trying not to focus on their mouths, the plushness there, the way both of them have soft pink lips that Tommy

can better imagine kissing now. Steves comment about Tiffany's lipgloss, the tasting sweet thing, is stuck in his head on a loop. Would kissing Steve right now be like kissing Tiffany? He's never really wanted to kiss someone this badly before, and he's trying to convince himself he wants to kiss Carol and Steve just happens to be there.

When Carol and Steve breathe out, they both have a determination in their eyes, and then they both turn to Tommy before lightly coughing. Steve feels like they're competing, who will cough first and look stupid in front of Tommy. But to Steve, Tommy doesn't seem to care. Steve passes the cigarette over to Tommy, and Carol waits to take another drag until Tommy does. They breathe in at the same time and they're staring at each other, and Tommy feels lost in her eyes. He can feel Steve looking at him, and that makes it easier to hold the smoke in and not breathe it out immediately.

Tommy wants to do this as gracefully as they did, so he tries to breathe out slowly. He mostly succeeds, only coughing a little at the end before handing the cigarette off to Steve again. Carol doesn't cough this time, and she smirks at Tommy before looking back at Steve. They do this synchronized smoking game until the cigarettes burn down to the filters, and then they put the butts out and shove them in the carton.

Carol tucks it back in her purse, "I'll throw it out on trash day" she says. She gets up and goes to sit between Tommy and Steve, so they have to scoot apart. Steve misses Tommy being pressed against him, and Tommy feels a strange kind of nervousness bubbling up when Carol leans into him. "Have fun boys? Your first kiss and your first cigarette in one night", Carol says wistfully. "It was pretty cool. Sorry you didn't get a kiss" Steve says, but he isn't really sorry and he doesn't sell his delivery either. "I'll just have to get my first kiss for real" she says, bumping her shoulder into Tommy's.

After sitting there comfortable for a few minutes in the quiet and warm basement, Steve starts feeling tired. He still wants to kiss Tommy, and he's not sure why. Maybe when he wakes up tomorrow, he'll have this out of his system. Carol looks over at the clock on the basement wall and jumps up, "Shit! I have to bike home. Tommy come on" she demands. Tommy was secretly hoping he'd get to stay with Steve a little longer, but Steve is half asleep and Tommy likes listening to Carol. Tommy gets off the couch and walks Carol through Steve's house and before he knows it they're grabbing their bikes from the front lawn.

“How was kissing Tiff?” Carol asks, only a little snarky, while they’re riding their bikes. “It was alright. She had on a lot of lipgloss.” Tommy replies. “Did it feel all magical?” Carol asks. Tommy considers lying, but Carol can usually tell when he lies, and he’s not sure she’d like the lie he’d tell anyway. “Not really” he says. When they finally get to Carol’s house she parks her bike and then she turns to Tommy and makes the same determined face she made when she was trying not to cough out her smoke before Steve did. Then she grabs Tommy’s shoulders and pulls him against her mouth. It isn't sweet or gentle the way Steve kissed Tiffany, or hesitant the way Tommy kissed Tiffany. But Tommy felt better this time. It’s a closed mouth kiss too, staying on theme, and Carol simply turns and walks into her house when she’s done.

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Freshman year Steve starts using the same hairspray as Carol. Maybe that’s what really crosses the wires, Tommy tries to reason. Carol and Steve smell similar now, along with acting similar. They both smell like that hairspray, but Carol wears sugary perfume that enhances the sweetness of it where Steve wears a cologne that cuts it. Tommy and Carol still aren’t fully official, but they’re not going to start dating anyone else. Steve has been going on dates and he’s gotten a kiss goodnight, but he doesn’t have a Carol. He doesn’t have a girl to fall back on like Tommy does.

Steve starts playing sports more seriously and he’s good at them. He’s getting leaner, more muscular, starting to get taller. Tommy doesn’t really get why taking notice of those things makes his stomach swoop the way it does. Steve notices things about Tommy too. How his voice is getting deeper, and he’s also getting taller, and he has to shave sometimes. Steve feels oddly fascinated with all of Tommy’s changes where Tommy wishes he could turn his head at Steve’s.

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Sophomore year Steve has his first proper make-out kiss. It’s in the back of Sarah William’s dad’s car after Sarah drives him out to the lake. He knows this is supposed to feel more special, but Steve just feels kind of jittery. Sarah lets Steve touch her tits, and that makes up for everything else because that gives him the best story to tell. Steve does tell the story to a couple of people right after, but not Tommy. Steve isn’t sure why, but telling Tommy feels kind of wrong. It just seems off and it makes Steve feel a little nauseous when he thinks about it.

Three weeks after it happens, Tommy finds out because Greg brings it up in the locker room. “Harrington, you ever get to touch on Sarah William’s tits again?”, he throws at Steve while they’re pulling on their clothes after showering. Steve laughs, tells him he hasn’t, pulls his shorts up. Tommy isn’t sure why he feels so weird when he finds out, why he has the urge to yell at Steve for it even though Steve is just being a normal guy. Maybe it’s because Steve didn’t tell Tommy when it happened. That if it were up to him, maybe Tommy never would’ve known.

Tommy and Steve make eye contact across the locker room after Steve dismisses Greg, and they both have an apology in their eyes. Matching stomach swooping mild nausea and awkwardness clinging to their skin. They’re both shirtless, and when they make apologetic eye contact they both feel hyper aware of that. They’re shirtless around each other all the time, but hearing about Steve touching tits while he’s shirtless has Tommy feeling weird. Tommy turns away and pulls his shirt on, and Steve follows.
The tension is left in the locker room. They never talk about Sarah Williams, but it opens the floodgate for them to talk about girls more.

Tommy starts dating Carol later that year, for real this time. Steve and Tommy are now able to talk about girls with each other most times. They’ll talk about girls in Steve’s car while he drives Tommy to and from school or practice. They’ll talk about girls in Tommy’s bedroom before his mom calls them down for dinner, or Steve’s room when everyone’s asleep or gone after a party. It should be easier with the frequency that they do it, but it always feels a little weird. There’s a palpable strangeness every time they talk about the things they do with girls, a tension in the air around them that’s thick and heavy. Matching unease bubbling up in their throats, flushed cheeks, tingling skin. It’s never like this with any of their other friends.

One day in Tommy’s room Steve makes a lewd gesture with his hand, telling Tommy about getting to third base with Abigail Hanson, a gesture with his middle and ring finger pressed together. Tommy feels the way his face must be bright red. Steve doesn’t say anything to him, but he tips his head back and laughs, brushes the same fingers along Tommy’s bare forearm. Tommy can almost feel the wetness Steve was just talking about, can feel Steve’s touch lingering on his skin. Tommy tells a story about him and Carol in her backseat, and Steve listens with a smile on his face, asking questions about technique that make Tommy want to squirm.

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Steve did a lot of things before Tommy. Steve gets his license first, and his first proper make out kiss first. Steve gets to second base with a girl first and third base with a girl first. Tommy and Carol had been weirdly dancing around each other with such a single-minded focus that Tommy didn't do stuff with any other girls. Once they started dating Carol and Tommy were a little hesitant because it felt weird to alleviate the tension between them.

Steve didn't have those problems. He'd grown to be smooth by junior year, ladies fawned over him all the time. He wasn't afraid to do anything with girls anymore. He pretty much knew how to touch them, and was used to their softness. Steve was always sweet to girls, but he never took things too slow.

But at the end of it all, Tommy loses his proper virginity before Steve does. It's not exactly a competition, but in a way it could be. If it was, Tommy finally won something. Tommy loses it to Carol in her baby pink bedroom. It smells like her hairspray. Steve's hairspray. Tommy actually likes Carol, and he liked the way it felt to have sex with her, which clears up some of his weirder feelings about Steve. For a long time it felt like Tommy liked Carol and Steve in the same way and the same amount. Mostly, it still does. But Tommy hasn't been close to Steve like that, so there's a little difference now.

Tommy tells Steve about it the day after it happens. He feels a little bit off center about it, but he remembers Steve not telling him about his first make out kiss. He remembers the way that was even worse than them talking about it, because even after Tommy knew, they never talked about Sarah William. When Tommy told Carol about that happening, Carol rolled her eyes and Called Steve an asshole. A few days later she spit in Sarah's cafeteria apple juice.

Tommy was trying to avoid the awkwardness, Steve knows Carol, so they have to talk about this. Tommy also can't have Carol thinking he's an asshole like Steve, or thinking he's embarrassed or something. All of that's true, but Tommy also secretly hopes it hurts Steve a little. Tommy finally won and has something over him. He hopes Steve's stomach churns the way Tommy's has in the past with Steve's hand gestures and whispered stories told on the same sheets they happened on.

"I finally fucked Carol," Tommy declares, passing Steve a cigarette while they sit in Steve's car outside his driveway. He cringes

internally, knowing he should phrase it better. Steve doesn't comment on that, just looks a little surprised while he lights the cigarette. "No shit? Good job, man" Steve smiles. He shakes his head like a dog, (hairspray smell making Tommy flush) and laughs. "Was it good? You gotta tell me you know, I've never done it" Steve adds all sly.

"Yeah it was good. All like… warm and super wet. Felt real good. Can't believe she let me." Tommy sums up the experience poorly after a drag of his own cigarette. "You make her cum?" Steve asks, looking curious. "Before we did it, yeah, with my hand" Tommy says, face growing more red. "Good job, man. That's why she let you do it. Good with your hands" Steve smirks, eyes flashing down to Tommy's hand curled around the cigarette. Tommy feels like he's buzzing all over, hot and jittery. Tommy doesn't say anything for a minute, and Steve blows some smoke in his face to get him to sputter out a "fuck off, Steve".

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Senior year is when everything starts getting serious. Over the summer, they fuck up a little. Steve and Tommy get stoned more often and hang out in Steve's basement. Sometimes Carol is there and sometimes she's not. Carol doesn't like to smell like weed, so when she smokes with them she usually makes them go out to the woods with her, unless her parents aren't home and then she'll hang out in the basement.

Some time over the summer it's just Steve and Tommy in the basement, stoned and staring at the ceiling, and then Steve speaks up, "You remember when we both kissed Tiffany that one time?".
"Sure do, our cutesy first kisses. Did I ever tell you I kissed Carol for the first time later that night?"
"Nah, but Carol did. She kissed you while you were on your bike, said she grabbed your shoulders."
"She sure did."
"Did you like it all rough like that? I've never had a girl be like that to me"
Tommy laughs, "I've never had anyone be all sweet the way you and your girls are. I've seen the way you kiss, like they're made of glass".

Steve huffs out a little bitchy noise, "I'm a gentleman, what can I say? Answer the question."
"Yeah I liked it. It's fun that way, less soft or whatever"
"Would… could you show me?" Steve asks. Tommy doesn't think he's heard him right, cocks an eyebrow at him. "I could show you gentle"

Steve suggests.

If they were sober, or less stoned than they are, they probably wouldn't even be saying this shit. But it feels natural now that it's all laying out. It seems like the obvious answer is 'yes'. So Tommy rolls over a little, gets on top of Steve and kisses him. Steve makes a little surprised sound in his throat, and so softly puts his hands around the back of Tommy's neck. Tommy's hand is fisted in the front of Steve's shirt, and he clicks their teeth together on accident. Steve coaxes his tongue into Tommy's mouth all sweet, but then Tommy is moving his tongue into Steve's mouth hard, and Steve just lets his mouth go lax, lets Tommy do all of the work.

Their tongues sliding around all wet and their teeth occasionally bumping, Steve is making little hiccuped noises he keeps trying to stop. Tommy moves his hips a little, and that's when it starts to set in what they're actually doing. Tommy's so in the clouds he doesn't really care. Steve is so good at this, all sweet and soft and pliant. Steve doesn't mind either, liking someone else taking charge, liking the energy Tommy is putting into this. It feels different than anything Steve's ever done, and better. He likes this more than the hookup he had the week before, is more excited just kissing on his basement carpet than screwing in that girls room.

After they're done, they don't talk about it. They go upstairs to Steve's bedroom and both climb into his bed and fall asleep all hazy and warm, and the next morning they pretend it never happened. The next time they get stoned Carol is there too, and Tommy keeps fidgeting until she tells him to stop. She lays her head In Tommy's lap and makes Steve get her a soda from the fridge, cutting through all Steve and Tommy's weird tension.

They make out a couple more times that summer. High in the basement again, drunk in the grass by Steve's pool, sober but worn out after a day at the lake in Tommy's bedroom. Once the school year starts it's harder to keep that shit up, and it's not like they've said a word about it anyway. There's school and practice and Carol, so they aren't alone with that much time and privacy as often. They can't smoke as much anymore, and they don't drink as much outside of parties.

Tommy wonders if Steve still thinks about it, because he does. Steve wonders the same thing about Tommy. Steve lays in the grass by the

pool sometimes or sits in the basement, trying to figure out how they did that and how nothing changed at all. They still drive to school and home and practice, still sit with Carol at lunch, still talk shit in math class, still eat dinner with Tommy's family. Nobody notices anything. Not even Carol, and she's with them all the time. Knows them better than anyone. Tommy's thought about telling her, doesn't know what she'd say. He never tells her.

Then Steve meets Nancy Wheeler, and suddenly she's all Steve ever talks about and Tommy hates it. She's not like Carol. She's not one of them. Tommy wonders if he could get Steve alone, if he could remind him how much he used to care about Tommy. Steve starts dating Nancy, and Tommy tries to be happy for him. He doesn't like that Nancy is all prissy and 'holier than thou' but he tries to deal with it.

Steve likes Nancy a lot. She's everything his parents have aways wanted for him, and it's about time that he gets a steady girlfriend like Tommy. He wants Nancy to slot in, to be like Carol, to be part of their little group. But the way Tommy and Carol look at Nancy, he doesn't think it'll ever happen.

End Notes

hope you liked this!! I loved writing this and it was pretty self indulgent but I hope I got the vibes that I wanted in here. there's some scrapped ideas that I think I'm going to turn into a separate fic. comments and kudos appreciated!!

side note: queer steve and queer tommy in the tags because I was going to make tommy gay but I love my carol so much that I think i made tommy kind of attracted to her too lol

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